

Benjamin Swan House  
37 Elm Street  
Woodstock  
Windsor County  
Vermont

HABS No. VT. 30  
HABS  
VT  
14-WOOD  
5

PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Eastern Office, Division of Design and Construction  
143 South Third Street  
Philadelphia 6, Pennsylvania

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

CHARLES DANA HOUSE

Street Address: 26 Elm Street, Woodstock, Windsor County, Vermont

Present Owner: The Woodstock Historical Society, Inc.

Present Occupant: Owner

Present Use: Historical Society House and Museum

Brief Statement of Significance: This house, built and owned by the prominent Dana family, now houses important historical collections relating to the Dana family, Woodstock and Vermont.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Original and subsequent owners: Original owner - Charles Dana. The house remained in the Dana family for three generations until 1943, when it was purchased by the Woodstock Historical Society.
2. Date of erection: 1807
3. Architect, builder, suppliers, etc.: Built for Charles Dana by Nathaniel Smith, a local builder-architect.
4. Original plans, construction, etc.: Unknown.
5. Notes on alterations and additions: The house remains essentially unchanged, except for modern alterations to the rear part of the house and the installation of display cases for the historical exhibits done since 1943 by the Historical Society.
6. Important old views: The Historical Society has a collection of early photographs of Woodstock, including views of the Dana House, located in the Dana House.
7. References: Henry Swan Dana, A History of Woodstock, Vermont, Houghton, Mifflin and Company, Boston and New York, 1889, pp. 178, et al.  
Dorothy and Richard Pratt, A Guide to Early American Homes, North, McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., New York, 1956, p. 82.  
The American Heritage Book of Great Historic Places, Richard M. Ketchum, editor, American Heritage Publishing Co. and Simon and Schuster, Inc., New York, 1957.

New England, New York, Inter-Agency Committee Survey (NENYAC), 1955, Typed cards by Dr. Thomas M. Pitkin, Recorder.

Old Buildings Project of the Robert Hull Fleming Museum at the University of Vermont, Burlington, 1937-38.

Mrs. J. Peter Gratiot, Otis Hill Farm, Woodstock, Vermont.

- B. Historical Events Connected with the Structure: Various members of the Dana family were prominent, both locally and nationally. Charles Dana (1781-1857) was an important early citizen in Woodstock. He moved to Woodstock in 1802, was a successful businessman, and served as town selectman 1825-1826.
- C. Likely sources not yet investigated: Documents preserved in the Dana House.

Prepared by Osmund R. Overby  
November 1959

## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

### A. General Statement:

- 1. Architectural character: This large town house, the home of a prosperous businessman in a prosperous town, is typical of the area and its period, but has unusual brick end walls in an otherwise frame house.
- 2. Condition of fabric: Maintained in excellent condition by the present owners.

### B. Technical Description of Exterior:

- 1. Overall dimensions: Two-and-a-half stories, plus cellar. Front block, approximately 40' x 30', plus ell to the rear, approximately 12' x 20'.
- 2. Foundations: Cut stone on front. Random stone on sides. Brick on rear ell.
- 3. Wall construction: Hewn timber frame front and rear walls with clapboards. Brick end walls on the sides, Flemish bond. Facade ornamented with wood pilasters, two stories high, at the corners in a modified Tuscan order.
- 4. Chimneys: Four chimneys, two built into each brick end wall.

5. Openings:

- a. Doorways and doors: Front - six-panel door with fan light and pilastered, pedimented frame. Side door leading to original kitchen - six panel with transom light. Modern French door on back.
- b. Windows and shutters: Twelve light over twelve light double hung window with fixed slat shutters. Ornamental wood lintels on first floor windows on facade.

6. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: Gable roof, asphalt shingles.
- b. Cornice, eaves: Boxed cornice, moulded trim, triglyphs, mutules.
- c. Dormers, cupolas: One small dormer on the rear, probably a late addition.

C. Technical Description of Interiors:

1. Floor plans: Central hall type with four chimneys in the end walls serving the four principal downstairs rooms. Second floor similar arrangement. First floor ell recently altered from shed to additional exhibit space. All rooms now used for the collections of the Historical Society.
2. Stairways: Principal stairway, straight run, in central hallway.
3. Flooring: Wide pine board flooring.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Plastered, papered.
5. Doorways and doors: Four panel interior doors.
6. Trim: Moulded wood trim, wooden wainscot in front hallway and in kitchen. Interior shutters in front rooms on first floor.
7. Hardware: Brass or wrought iron.
8. Lighting: Electric.
9. Heating: Fireplaces only; no modern heating.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: House faces east on city lot on a principal street.
2. Enclosures: None
3. Outbuildings: Barn to the rear houses additional collections of the Historical Society.
4. Walks, driveways, etc.: Concrete walk.
5. Landscaping, gardens, etc.: Informal - trees, lawn, shrubs, flowers.

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